

## session 14: **handout**

### CHARACTERISTICS OF STRONG FAMILIES

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- **Appreciation, respect and affection** – Members of strong families regularly demonstrate love, care and support for each other. Family members take note of and recognize the contribution each individual makes to the family.
- **Commitment** – Members of strong families invest time and energy into the family and make sure that work and other activities don't take too much time away from the family.
- **Positive Communication** – Members of strong families spend time talking with and listening to each other. Sometimes this communication can be focused on getting a task done. Other times it's important for it to just be open-ended, rambling talk about what's on a family member's mind. When strong families do argue, they use positive communication skills to work out problems without hurting each other's feelings.
- **Fun time together** – Strong families make time to have fun together; this doesn't have to mean spending lots of money. It just means that members of the family find common activities they can enjoy and they make the most of simple good times. Some families find it's important to set up family rituals or traditions to emphasize the importance of this time.
- **Shared values and spirituality** – Families describe this in different ways. It can be religious expression, commitment to important causes or values, or a recognition of the caring center each person has and expresses.
- **Ability to cope with stress and crisis** – Strong families are adaptable and able to work together in times of crisis. Members know they can count on each other and are willing to change and take on new roles in the family as needs or emergencies arise.

(Adapted from *Secrets of Strong Families*, John DeFrain and Nick Stinnett)